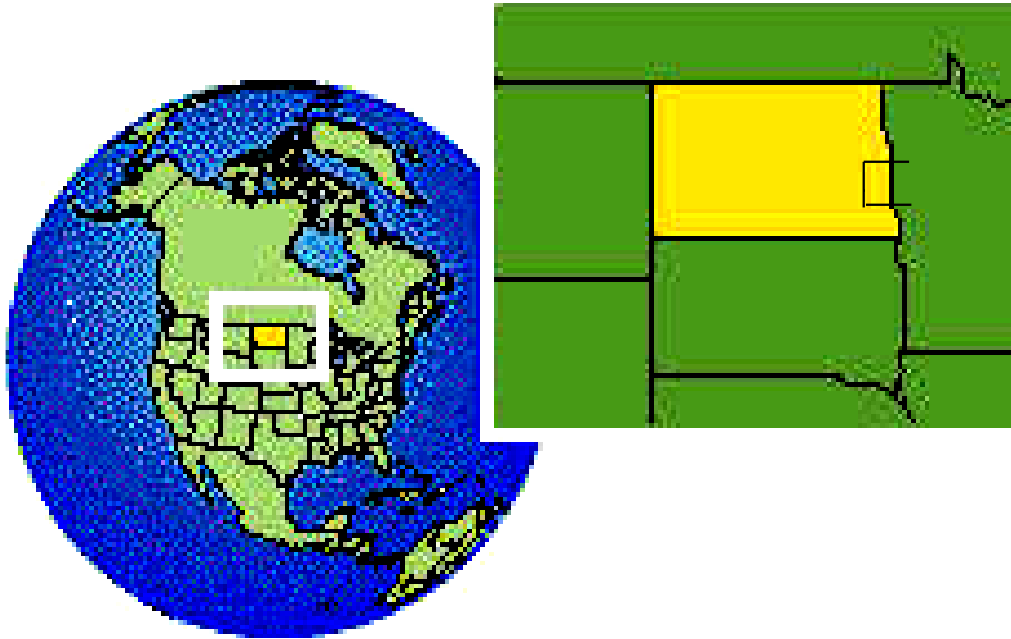


Cass County

North Dakota



Popular Report

A Financial Summary for its Citizens

Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2003

Cass County

On the eastern border of North Dakota lies the Red River Valley, a valley that has its origin in Glacial Lake Agassiz, an enormous ice-dammed lake that developed at the end of the last ice age. As Glacial Lake Agassiz drained, it deposited clay rich soils that are among the richest in the world, supporting wheat, barley, sugar beets and sunflowers. Encompassing 1,749 square miles, **Cass County** is located in the heart of this valley.



Agriculture is an important part of the economy, but the Fargo-Cass County metro area is also a thriving business area and a vital part of the economy of the county. Kiplinger's April 2001 issue ranked Fargo number two as a small metro entrepreneurial "hot spot". Also, national surveys



have consistently ranked Fargo and Cass County as a good place to live and raise a family. The area is home to five colleges and universities providing higher education, so its citizens are well educated, with strong mid-western work ethics. There's a symphony, the opera, the Plains Art Museum, big name entertainment in the Fargo Dome, college sports teams

and the Red Hawks minor league baseball team. Two major medical facilities are also located in the metro area.

According to the 2000 census, the population of Cass County is 123,138, an increase of almost 20% since 1990. Most of this increase is due to the growth in the metropolitan areas. The county seat and largest city in the county and state is Fargo, with a current population of 90,599. In the past few years, several magazines have proclaimed this area as a great place to live and work, and in June of 2000 the National Civic League named Fargo-Moorhead an All-American City. This designation just confirmed what its citizens have always known.....

The Red River Valley's riches are not just in the soil!

This Popular Report provides an overview of the operations of Cass County's constitutional

offices:

- Board of County Commissioners
- Auditor
- Treasurer
- County Recorder
- Sheriff
- State's Attorney



This report also presents an overview of each county department. The presentation reflects the county's governmental operations.

Governmental operations are those primarily supported by tax dollars for services such as law enforcement, social welfare and highways and bridges. The governmental category can be further subdivided between operations and capital activities. Capital project activities are dollars spent to construct, acquire or improve major facilities of the government.

Financial information in this report includes the governmental and proprietary funds of the county and has been summarized from Cass County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). It includes a condensed statement of net assets, condensed statements of revenues and expenditures, an overview of county functions and historical data. This report does not include financial information about the county's component units. The component units consist of the four Water Resource Districts — Southeast Cass, North Cass, Maple River and Rush River; and the Cass County Vector Control District and Noxious Weed District. Because this report does not include the component units and the information is summarized, the Popular Report is not prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Complete financial information on the individual Water Resource Districts can be obtained at Water Resource Districts, P.O. Box 5012, West Fargo, ND 58078. Complete financial information for the Cass County Vector Control and Noxious Weed Districts can be obtained at the Cass County Auditor's Office, P.O. Box 2806, Fargo, ND 58108. The county's Comprehensive Annual Financial Statement (CAFR) can be obtained at the Cass County Auditor's Office, P.O. Box 2806, Fargo, ND 58108.

2003 Highlights:

- ◆ Cass County received its 10th consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA for the 2002 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
- ◆ County commissioners started out 2002 with new laptop computers. These computers enable the commissioners to have agendas, supporting documents, correspondence and meeting minutes at their fingertips. Over the next few years the county will also be upgrading and standardizing its current computer system to keep pace with today's technology.
- ◆ Cass County received a \$2.2 million grant from FEMA to purchase undeveloped and agricultural land for a greenway along the Wild Rice and Red Rivers. The goal of the grant is to keep homes and businesses out of flood-prone areas.
- ◆ The new jail was dedicated on August 28th, 2002 and the half-cent sales tax, approved by Cass County voters in 1999 to finance the construction of the new jail, ended March 31, 2003, six months earlier than expected!
- ◆ 2002 was the most successful year yet in reducing worker's comp claims with not a single day of "time lost" due to a workplace injury reported. This is due to Cass County's participation in safety and risk management.

Cass County Government

Cass County government operates under a Home Rule Charter passed by the voters in

Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting

PRESENTED TO

**CASS COUNTY
GOVERNMENT,
NORTH DAKOTA**

**For the fiscal year ending
December 31, 2001**



William Patrick Pate
President
Jeffrey L. Esser

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has given an award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular annual Financial Reporting to Cass County Government for its Popular Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2002. The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports.

In order to receive an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a Popular Annual Financial Report, whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability and reader appeal.

An Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. Cass County Government has received a Popular Award for the last three consecutive years. We believe our current report continues to conform to the Popular Annual Financial Reporting requirements, and we are submitting it to GFOA.

1994. The County Commission is made up of five residents representing districts, elected at-large by the county voters. The Commissioners' offices are in the Cass County Courthouse where public meetings are held.

In addition to the County Commissioners, voters elect five constitutional officers: Auditor, Treasurer, County Recorder, Sheriff and State's Attorney.

Cass County Government				
Statement of Net Assets				
	2003		2002	
Assets				
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$	22,413,117	\$	15,770,226
Receivables		2,149,724		3,013,506
Other assets		621,005		534,009
Property, plant and equipment		77,748,928		75,255,418
Total assets		102,932,774		94,573,159
Liabilities				
Payables		855,245		552,349
Other Liabilities		5,735,418		4,717,483
Leases, notes & payables		1,203,806		1,316,784
Bonds payable		427,201		491,205
Total Liabilities		8,221,670		7,077,821
Net Assets				
Invested in Capital Assets		77,517,018		74,900,282
Restricted For:				
Special Purposes		5,429,022		3,664,769
Debt Service		447,586		507,369
Capital Projects		5,223,671		3,251,715
Unrestricted		6,093,807		5,171,203
Total Net Assets		94,711,104		87,495,338

Proprietary operations, called internal service funds, include services provided internally on a cost-reimbursement basis. The county has three internal service funds: Health Insurance Trust, Motor Pool Trust and Telephone Trust.

General Government

The governmental operations of the county include the following funds:

The General Fund accounts for resources obtained and used for services traditionally provided by county government, except those that are required legally or by sound management to be accounted for in another fund.

Special Revenue Funds are used to account for revenues that are legally restricted to expenditures for particular purposes. The county has several special revenue funds:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ◆ Human Services | ◆ State's Attorney Asset Forfeiture |
| ◆ County Road & Bridge | ◆ Senior Citizens |
| ◆ Special 10 Mill Road | ◆ Job Development |
| ◆ Veterans Service Office | ◆ 911 Service Land-Lines |
| ◆ Sheriff's Asset Forfeiture | ◆ 911 Service Wireless |
| ◆ JAIBG Fund | ◆ Emergency Fund |
| ◆ Sheriff Block Grant Fund | ◆ NDRIN - County Recorder |
| ◆ Jail Commissary | ◆ Document Preservation |
| ◆ Hazardous Plan/Response | ◆ County Park |
| ◆ Valley Water Rescue | ◆ Federal Disaster Aid |

Debt Service Funds accumulate the resources used to pay the principal and interest on general long-term debt. The debt service funds include:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ◆ Round Hill Subdivision | ◆ Windsor Green Subdivision |
| ◆ Holmen's 3rd Subdivision | ◆ Sleepy Hollow Subdivision |
| ◆ Borderud's Subdivision | ◆ Forest River Subdivision |

(The subdivision funds are used to accumulate resources for improvements in specific subdivisions.)

Capital Project Funds account for the acquisition and construction of major capital facilities. The following are the county's capital project funds:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ◆ Future Building | ◆ Round Hill Subdivision |
| ◆ County Jail Building | ◆ Holmen's 3rd Subdivision |
| ◆ Forest River Subdivision | ◆ Register of Deeds Grant Project |

General Government Revenues

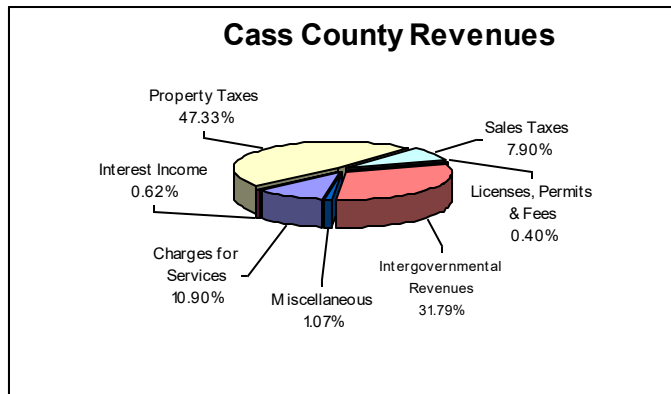
The following schedule presents a summary of revenues for the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds and Capital Project Funds for fiscal years 2002 and 2003. The mill rate decreased in 2003: from 66.50 mills to 66.00 mills. In 2003 taxable value increased - by almost \$19 million. Tax collections remain strong with over 94% collected by December 31, 2003.

The pie chart represents revenues that fund the general governmental operations. Property taxes and intergovernmental revenues continue to make up the bulk of county funds with over 70% of total revenues. The majority of intergovernmental revenues are from the State of North Dakota

and consist of payments from the State Aid Fund, which is a sharing of sales tax revenues; Highway Distribution Funds, which is a sharing of gas tax revenues; and Human Service reimbursements for social programs. Charges for service increased due to a multi-jurisdictional

Revenues	2003	2002	Increase (Decrease)
Property Taxes	\$17,785,008	\$16,062,634	\$ 1,722,374
General Sales Tax	2,967,611	8,009,194	(5,041,583)
Intergovernmental Revenues	11,945,099	12,363,921	(418,822)
Licenses, permits & fees	151,204	147,139	4,065
Charges for Services	4,095,337	3,245,720	849,617
Miscellaneous	635,382	508,499	126,883
Total Revenue	\$37,579,641	\$40,337,107	\$ (2,757,466)

construction project administered by the county and reimbursed by the various entities. Sales tax revenues were used to fund the construction and initial start-up of the new county jail. Due to the strong economy in Cass County, the sales tax was ended on March 31, 2003, six months before it was set to expire.



General Government Expenditures

This schedule presents a summary of expenditures for governmental operations.

The expenditures for conservation and economic development reflect flood recovery efforts that are administered by the Lake Agassiz Regional Council. These efforts are for the recovery from the flood of 2001.

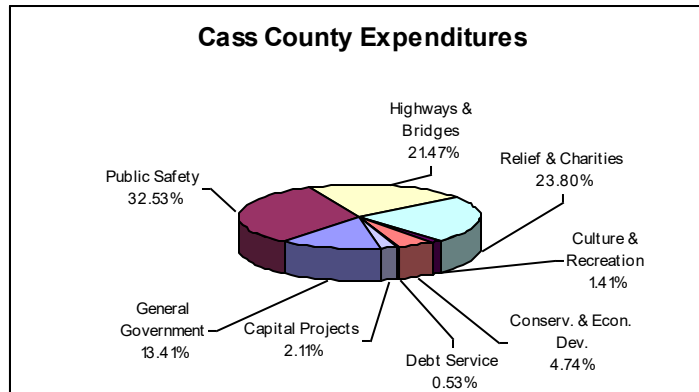
Over the next few years the county will be upgrading and standardizing its current computer systems. This process began in 2002 and resulted in an increase in general government expenditures. Public safety expenditures increased due to the addition of thirty-two new staff members needed to man the new jail. With the completion of the construction on the new county jail, capital projects expenditures decreased. The decrease in public works was due to the completion of the recovery efforts from the spring flood of 2001.

The pie chart illustrates the expenditures of general governmental operations. Public safety,

Expenditures	2003	2002	Increase (Decrease)
General Government	\$ 4,453,607	\$ 4,366,461	\$ 87,146
Public Safety	10,801,885	9,437,503	1,364,382
Public Works	7,129,641	7,226,360	(96,719)
Human Services	7,903,898	7,802,578	101,320
Culture & Recreation	468,984	417,521	51,463
Conservation & Economic Development	1,574,123	2,497,721	(923,598)
Capital Outlay	699,420	6,334,131	(5,634,711)
Debt Service	174,347	148,469	25,878
Total Expenditures	\$ 33,205,905	\$38,230,744	\$ (5,024,839)

public works and human services account for 91% of total expenditures. Public safety includes the sheriff's office, jail operations and the state's attorney office. The 10 Mill Road Fund and the Road and Bridge Fund make up public works. Human services consist of program expense and administrative costs of providing assistance to the county's most vulnerable residents. Most, but not all, of these programs are mandated by either state or federal governments.

The general government includes the county commission and constitutional offices of the county auditor, county treasurer and county recorder. Also included in this category are other offices concerned with general operations of the county, such as tax assessor, information services, county coordinator and veteran's service.



Governing Board

A board of five commissioners governs the county. The Board of Commissioners has plenary power to enact ordinances and resolution. Among the powers granted this body in the home rule charter are:

The commissioners' budget includes funding for several public service agencies: Rural Cass County Ambulance and Rescue Association, Fargo Cass Public Health, Red River Valley Fair,

- ♦ Levy taxes
- ♦ Authorize bond issues
- ♦ Make appropriations
- ♦ Approve the annual budget
- ♦ Approve the payment of bills
- ♦ Appoint county officials who are not elected, and members of certain committees and boards
- ♦ Grant certain licenses
-
- ♦ Set salaries

Budget	\$1,340,796
Expenditures	1,289,280
Under Budget	\$ (51,516)

Cass County Historical Society and the Humane Society.

The commissioners' offices are in the county courthouse at 211 9th Street South, Fargo, ND where the commission meetings are held. The Board meets the first and third Monday of each month. Meetings are open to the public. Minutes and agendas are published in The Forum or can be viewed at the County's website <http://www.casscountygov.com>.

Currently, the Board of Commissioners consist of:

Robyn Sorum
 Scott Wagner, Chairman
 Vern Bennett
 Darrell Vanyo
 John Meyer



Auditor

The auditor's office has been called the

catch-all for miscellaneous duties required by state law. Among the responsibilities of the county auditor are chief financial officer, executive secretary of the county commission, property tax administrator and election administrator.

As chief financial officer, the auditor oversees all fiscal activities of the county. These activities include controlling county funds. The auditor disburses funds and must ensure that all expenditures are legal, budgeted and in accordance with county policy and procedures. The auditor also prepares the county budget and the financial statements of all county entities. As property tax administrator, the auditor collects the budgets for each taxing entity in the county, reviews the budgets and computes the mill levies. The auditor also administers all countywide elections.

Budget	\$ 584,530
Expenditures	578,007
Under Budget	\$ (6,523)

Michael Montplaisir has been the County Auditor since January of 1991.

Treasurer

The treasurer serves as the central collection point for all funds received by the county. Payments range from tax collections and fines to charges for services. Tax collections remain strong with 94% of the current taxes collected by December 31, 2003. The treasurer is responsible for investing the county's funds in securities as authorized by state statute. The treasurer's office also issues marriage licenses and certified copies of death certificates.

Budget	\$ 242,999
Expenditures	237,452
Under Budget	\$ (5,547)

Charlotte Sandvik has been the County Treasurer since May 1991.



State's Attorney

The state's attorney is the chief law enforcement officer in the county. This office represents the county in civil litigation and prosecutes offenders of state law. The state's attorney also provides legal advice and opinions to county, township and school officials and various county boards.

Birch Burdick was elected State's Attorney in 1998.

County Recorder

The county recorder's duties include recording deeds and other instruments affecting title to real estate, chattel mortgages, bills of sale, liens and all other instruments authorized by law to be recorded. The county recorder is the custodian of all instruments filed with them and of all records of the office.

Budget	\$1,253,775
Expenditures	1,209,875
Under Budget	\$ (43,900)

Deanna Kensrud is the County Recorder. She has been in office since July of 1974.

Sheriff

Budget	\$ 433,983
Expenditures	421,817
Under Budget	\$ (12,166)

The sheriff is the county's chief peace officer. His duties are to preserve peace in the county, to make arrests, to administer the jail, to care for and transport prisoners, and to serve all criminal and civil papers.

The Juvenile Detention Center is also under the supervision of the county sheriff. This cen-

ter is a short term holding facility for juveniles between the ages of 12 and 17 years of age who are awaiting court hearings or transportation.

Donald Rudnick has served as the County Sheriff since 1979.

Appointed Offices

County Coordinator

The county coordinator is responsible for ensuring the effective delivery of county services. The coordinator makes recommendations to the board of commissioners, implements its policies and manages the personnel office and the building and grounds staff.

Bonnie Johnson has been the County Coordinator since 1990.

Many of the policies and procedures regarding Cass County Government administration can be found on the Cass County website:

www.casscountygov.com.

Budget	\$7,488,740
Expenditures	7,425,658
Under Budget	\$ (63,082)



Director of Equalization

The Director of Tax Equalization helps local assessors ensure that uniform methods and procedures for property assessments are used throughout the county. They also levy and collect taxes on all mobile homes in the county.

Francis Klein has been the Director of Equalization since 1988.

Budget	\$1,502,899
Expenditures	1,131,897
Under Budget	\$ (371,002)

County Extension Service

This is the county office of the NDSU Extension Service. Their mission is to improve quality of life through education and service. The services of the county extension office include agriculture, horticulture, human development, food and nutrition, and 4-H youth development. They work with local agencies, organizations and individuals, both rural and urban.

Budget	\$ 134,009
Expenditures	118,836
Under Budget	\$ (15,173)

Brad Cogdill heads this department.

Veteran's Service Office

The veteran's service officer acquaints veterans and families of veterans with state and federal laws that concern them. This office assists with such matters as pensions, military records, VA benefits, proofs of service, burial and death payments. These services are not only offered to veterans but also widows, orphans, and dependents of veterans.



Budget	\$ 378,656
Expenditures	337,020
Under Budget	\$ (41,636)

James Brent has been the Veteran's Service Officer since 1996.

Information Technology

This office is responsible for all computer and network related services provided to county em-

ployees and departments. It is responsible for network and PC support at the Cass County Courthouse, the Annex, the Cass County Jail and the Cass County Road Department in West Fargo. This office is also responsible for coordinating network access for local and state government entities. The 'Audix-Voice Mail' phone service is also run through this department.

Budget	\$ 138,039
Expenditures	130,584
Under Budget	\$ (7,455)

Regional Child Support

This office enforces the collection of child support payments for a six-county area that includes Cass, Richland, Ransom, Sargent, Steele and Trail counties. The responsibilities include establishing paternity, locating absent parents, and establishing, enforcing and reviewing child support orders. All services are automatically provided to families who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Identical services are provided to non-AFDC families upon request. This office is under the supervision of the State's Attorney.



Kathy Ziegelmann has been the director of this office since 1992.

Budget	\$ 868,448
Expenditures	763,003
Under Budget	\$ (105,445)

Social Services

Cass County social services provides services that are designated by public statute or policy to vulnerable children, adults and families so that they may secure or maintain self-sufficiency. The two major program areas are social services and economic assistance. The agency is directly responsible to the Cass County Social Service Board which consists of all five county commissioners and two non-voting advisory members.

Budget	\$1,137,084
Expenditures	1,113,925
Under Budget	\$ (23,159)

Kathy Hogan has been Social Service Director since 1990.

Road Department

The county engineer is responsible for constructing and maintaining the county's 311 bridges and 625 miles of paved and gravel roads. Administration, finance and road improvements are the major areas of this department. In addition, the county engineer supervises weed and vector control as well as county planning services. This budget includes the County Road and Bridge Fund and the Special 10 Mill Road Fund.

Keith Berndt has been the County Engineer since 1992.

In a public ceremony that included a flag raising and the singing of the national anthem, the new jail was dedicated on August 28th, 2002. Public tours were conducted on Saturday, August 31st and inmates finally moved into the facility on September 8th, 2002.



Budget	\$8,336,034
Expenditures	7,903,898
Under Budget	\$ (432,136)

The new Cass County Jail is 123,108 square feet and has approximately 250 beds. It was designed to be a 'direct supervision' facility. This means a group of inmates is housed in a 'pod' arranged around a common area with its own vending machines and recreation area. There is constant inmate observation. Prisoners are assigned to a pod and

won't leave it except for sick call and medical appointments.

Cass County successfully lobbied the North Dakota legislature for a new law allowing the classification of prisoners by behavior. As

Budget	\$7,534,308
Expenditures	7,129,641
Under Budget	\$ (404,667)

a result, prisoners are separated by behavior and sex. Violent prisoners don't have access to the vending machines or recreation areas and are housed in cells with steel doors, stainless steel toilet/

sinks and mattresses on cement slabs. Other cells have wood doors, mirrors, ceramic toilets and sinks, real beds and more space. There are also 48 beds available for the work release program. This unit is separate from the general population with its own entrance, visitation area and men's and women's locker rooms



Cass County Jail



On September 9th, The Forum gave the "Cass County Commission and everyone who played a role in the planning and construction of the new jail" Prairie Roses and said "this is one of the finest facilities of its kind in the country."

County Offices:

Cass County Auditor
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5600
auditor@co.cass.nd.us

Cass County Commission Office
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5609
701-241-5610
commission@co.cass.nd.us

How to Contact Cass County Government

Cass County Coordinator
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5720
coordinator@co.cass.nd.us

Cass County Extension Services
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5700
cass@ndsuent.nodak.edu

Cass County Recorder
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5620
recorder@co.cass.nd.us

Cass County Sheriff
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5800
sheriff@co.cass.nd.us

Cass County Social Services
Cass County Annex
PO Box 2986
Fargo ND 58108-2986
701-241-5761
socialservice@co.cass.nd.us

Cass County State's Attorney
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5850
attorney@co.cass.nd.us

Tax Equalization Director
(County Assessor)

Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5616
assessor@co.cass.nd.us

Cass County Treasurer
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5611
treasurer@co.cass.nd.us

Regional Child Support Enforcement
Cass County Courthouse
PO Box 2806
Fargo ND 58108-2806
701-241-5640
regional@co.cass.nd.us

Other Contacts:

District Court	701-241-5680
Water Resources	701-281-0223
Weed/Vector Control	701-282-5487